

# CITY OF PORTLAND

## 2020 State Legislative Agenda

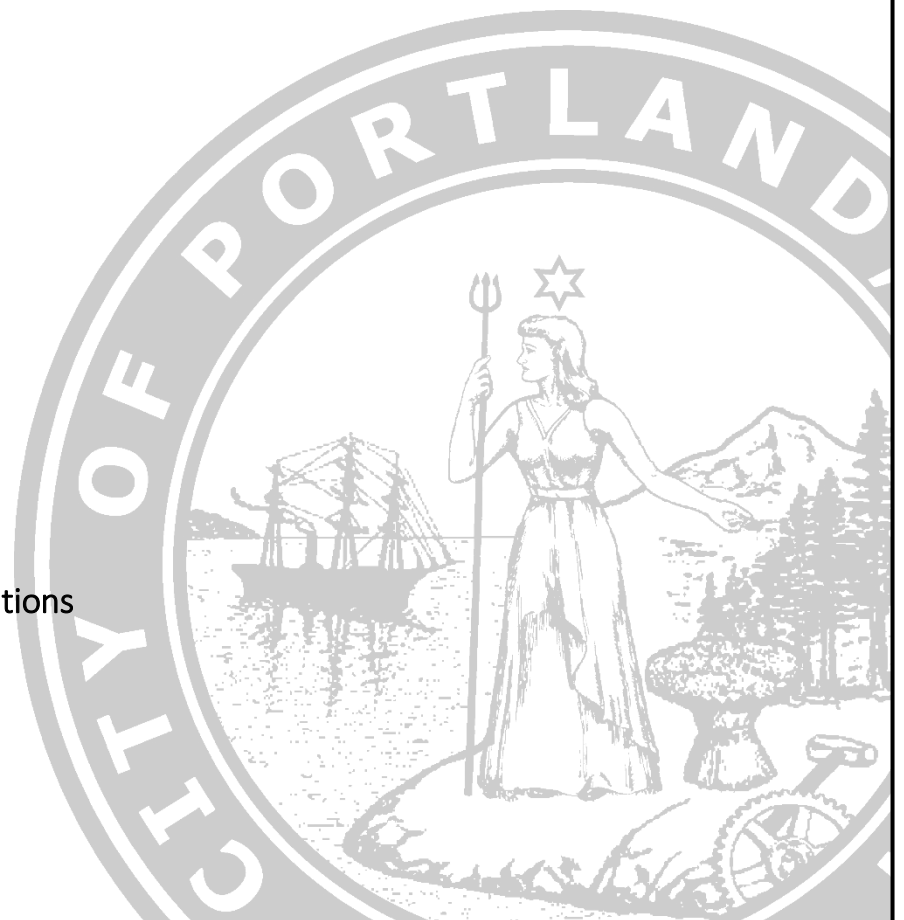
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# City of Portland Council

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## HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

### **Objective:**

Support legislation to reduce carbon emissions, improve equity in clean energy access, and mitigate the short- and long-term risks and impacts associated with fossil fuels.

### **Issue:**

The climate crisis presents one of the most far-reaching environmental, economic, public health and social problems of the 21st century, especially for Oregon's black and indigenous communities, communities of color, and low-income populations. The problem is urgent and immense. Moreover, mitigating and eliminating emissions, shifting Oregon's energy supply and transportation sector away from fossil fuels, and building resiliency with frontline communities are paramount to tackle this crisis and create a healthy environment. The City of Portland is taking steps toward achieving these goals through the voter-approved Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund. The City is also committed to protecting public health and the environment through preserving and enhancing green infrastructure and cultural resources. In the 2020 state legislative session, the City will continue to defend and advance these efforts by advocating for the following priorities:

#### **Reduce Emissions & Invest in a Low-Carbon Future**

The City of Portland supports legislation to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis by enacting a comprehensive policy for reducing carbon and investing in a low-carbon future. To this end, the transportation sector is a fundamental component of reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality. In Oregon, transportation accounts for approximately 40 percent of the state's total greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing single occupancy vehicle trips, increasing transit ridership, building safe infrastructure to encourage more active transportation, and transitioning to electric and other zero-emission vehicles throughout Oregon are central to reducing emission levels. Reducing the carbon intensity of our local and state energy supply will require public and private coordination and the City supports State efforts that accelerate a just energy transition.

#### **Increase Equity in Clean Energy Access**

The City of Portland supports legislation to make structural changes to the Public Utility Commission's regulatory and financial support mechanisms to enable greater social and racial equity in accessing clean, affordable energy. The primary mechanisms available to low-income customers to reduce their energy bills are state emergency bill assistance, Federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and weatherization services. These support resources are limited and the need by households drastically outpaces available funding. Structural changes to utility ratemaking are needed to better balance this inequity.

#### **Mitigate Risk of Fossil Fuels**

The City of Portland supports legislation to reduce environmental and public safety risks and impacts associated with fossil fuels. Working with partner jurisdictions, the City will pursue a comprehensive approach to keep Portlanders and Oregonians safe by taking steps to prevent accidents from occurring, reducing the risk of widespread damage when an event does occur, and better preparing communities to respond to incidents. The City also supports long term strategies and action to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and associated infrastructure.

## PUBLIC SAFETY & ACCOUNTABILITY

### **Objective:**

Advance legislation to enhance public trust and consistency in accountability of law enforcement, and support efforts to strengthen public safety through additional firearm safety measures.

### **Issue:**

The City of Portland is committed to improving public safety and public trust with the community. One key step toward these goals is more effective and consistent enforcement of disciplinary actions for police officers. The City of Portland is also committed to sensible firearm safety measures to protect children and adults from gun violence. The City will advance these efforts by advocating for the following priorities in the 2020 state legislative session:

#### **Improve Officer Accountability**

The City of Portland supports legislation giving the Chief of Police and the Portland Police Commissioner the tools needed to hold police officers to the highest professional standards. A statutory change will provide clear and consistent expectations about officer conduct and contribute to public trust in the Portland Police Bureau.

#### **Promote Gun Safety**

The City of Portland supports legislation limiting access to guns by unauthorized users, including children, which can reduce tragedies due to suicide, unintentional discharge, and gun theft. Gun violence poses a serious threat to the safety, livability, and health of our community. According to the Oregon Health Authority, in 2017 there were 528 firearm-related deaths in Oregon, with 74 of those occurring in Multnomah County. Limiting access to firearms through appropriate restrictions will help curb the number of fatalities and serious injuries. The City will also support efforts to provide local officials additional tools to combat the gun violence epidemic.

## PUBLIC HEALTH & HOUSING

### **Objective:**

Protect and increase funding for community mental health services and remove barriers to equitable homeownership.

### **Issue:**

The effects of an underfunded mental health system, particularly at the intersection with public safety and housing insecurity, are felt acutely in the City of Portland. Directly confronted with the impact of an under-resourced and overwhelmed system of care, the City partners with other jurisdictions who provide public health support and services for individuals experiencing homelessness, addiction and mental health issues. Likewise, a lack of stable and affordable housing continues to put vulnerable families and individuals at increased risk of experiencing homelessness. Homeownership is a key tool on the continuum toward addressing housing stability, economic mobility and historical inequities, particularly for communities of color. In the 2020 state legislative session, the City of Portland will advocate for the following:

#### **Fund Community Mental Health**

The City of Portland supports funding to stabilize community-based mental health services and is partnering with Multnomah County and other service providers to support investments that close significant gaps in Oregon's mental health care system. Ensuring the Oregon Health Authority and counties have adequate resources to fund community mental health is key to avoiding further erosion of this vital safety net. Further, the City will strongly advocate for greater investment in, and reforms to improve, the behavioral health system statewide.

#### **Advance Equitable Homeownership & Opportunity**

Homeownership is a primary wealth building strategy and families of color in Oregon have been adversely affected by discriminatory policies and practices creating unequal access to homeownership. In 2018, the City of Portland supported the establishment of a Task Force on Addressing Racial Disparities in Homeownership. The City supports the continued work of the Task Force and will support its recommendations to reduce and eliminate homeownership disparities in Oregon.

In Portland, the Homebuyer Opportunity Limited Tax Exemption (HOLTE) allows the city to forgo property tax revenues in order to incentivize affordable homeownership opportunities. Currently, construction of a home must be completed within two years to qualify for the tax exemption. However, this can be a barrier for nonprofit developers and the narrow window puts low- and moderate-income housing units at risk of losing eligibility for the tax benefit. The City of Portland will seek more flexibility in HOLTE to extend construction period eligibility for up to two more years if progress is being made with construction.

## LOCAL DECISION-MAKING

**Objective:**

Protect and strengthen the City of Portland's authority to address policy issues, raise revenue, and manage city administration.

**Issue:**

In order to expand and enhance the City of Portland's ability to address policy issues locally and manage the administration of its programming with adequate resources, the City will actively pursue:

- Delegated speed-setting authority of city roadways as a key step towards meeting the City's Vision Zero goals to reduce crashes and save lives.
- Statutory authorization for federal background checks for Revenue Division employees to achieve compliance with Internal Revenue Service guidelines and ensure efficient revenue collection.

Additionally, the City will strongly oppose efforts to limit its authority to develop and enforce local ordinances and voter-approved measures, manage its bureaus and their functions, and raise local revenue. For example, the City of Portland will actively advocate against restrictions of local authority on:

- Regulation of emerging technologies, including transportation network companies and autonomous vehicles
- System development charges (SDCs)
- Transient lodging tax
- The Portland Clean Energy Surcharge
- Franchise fees
- Right of way management
- Utility license fees
- Telecommunications taxes
- Public contracting
- Alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis taxes
- Construction excise tax
- Tenant protections and relocation assistance



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